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Thy gentle hand
Seized mine; I yielded- Milton.

QUIDNONIANA.

No III.

"Lord Litteton, after perusing Doctor Watts' ingenious theory, concerning the coupling of congenial souls in Paradise who were destined to become each other's partners when embodied on earth, observes that

Some unluckly gale must have parted his own chosen spirit from him while on their way to their place of destination. If this fanciful supposition were correct, the superior intelligences who might have the task of assorting souls in pairs, should seem to do their office very strangely, and rather by chance-medley than design, as far as men can judge of the matter, who have been grumbling at the malfeasances of their spare ribs, ever since the flood.

How many queer reasons we hear assigned for the formation of preposterous matches!

Longimanus Beaupole, a lean, slim seven feet writhing, married Parva Squat a lady four feet high and broad as she was long, because her hair caught and tangled in his watchchain, in a waltz, which was 'so romantic'.

Judy Smallwit being a rich heiress married the first man who made his bow to her, Pauper Starveling, because she wanted to know something; and when her curiosity was satisfied she ran away to her friends, and cried herself into a deep decline.

Sally Simple an amiable maiden lady of forty, married the father of nineteen children, for Love; and his oldest son cuffed her and broke her heart by ill treatment.

Malvina Singpsalms, an aged devotee married a profligate young dissolute, for the sake of converting him; and he broke her neck, while driving her home in his tandem.

Harry Fantastic married a woman who had the dropsy, because there was so much of her: and Billy Sentimental took to wife a lady who was going off in a galloping consumption, because she looked so interesting.

PHIL Adonis who was very vain of his person, married the ugliest woman he could lay his eyes on, whom a Yankee had abandoned, because she was too bitter, for the sake of the contrast.

To waste no more time on such extravagancies, we proceed in our disquisition on Matrimony. In the different prospects of Men and Women, when they begin their journey for life, there is this broad distinction; the male looks forward to the enjoyment of wealth and honours, as the good they bestow will emanate from himself; the female, as they will be reflected on her. The former, pursuing his career, seeks for comfort and pleasure at home, and wishes for a progeny to whom he may transmit his acquisitions. These things, a wife and family are incidental to his schemes; and whatever particular bias may direct his choice must depend on his own constitution, ~~and~~ the contingencies which develope his propensities, and ruling passions. After he has taken a wife, he has only a double spur, to urge him on in search of influence and emolument.

But with a woman, it is far different. She looks to marriage as her first and last object, from the moment she trembles on the verge of womanhood. There all her plans centre; in it all her artifices originate, and there they tend. As she is to be wooed, she can always know her own mind; and when she does, she cannot always afford to be particular. Her maxim pretty generally is, provided money which she is taught to look on as the grand requisite, be not very scarce, – "first come, first served." Without this wise ordination of Providence, the great ends of society would not be accomplished. If women could ~~not~~

wander like the other sex, and chuse for themselves, the happy pair who had mutually made an unembarrassed election, might jump into one another's arms and be assured of open, undisguised affection – although the probability of its continuance would be even then to the full as uncertain as it is in the present order of things – for an ancient maxim has sagely taught us, that people may court ten years without becoming acquainted with each other's imperfections. But as the natural modesty of the sex has established a sacred barrier of decorum, which the men alone must pass; as they had rather take any body than not be married at all; and as they cannot expect that their charms will last forever, or that new suitors will come like the kingly shadows in Macbeth, to pass "from the sharp, polished ice of their hearts" – taking these things into consideration, even if their volition were uncontrolled by parents, or their other passions unexcited by the glitter of wealth, or the pomp of rank, – they cannot always, they rarely *can* be very certain of the individuality of their affection. And here, as in every other concern, we must commit our happiness into the hands of that power, which the ancients called Destiny; but which a milder creed has taught us to confide in as making all things 'work together for good.'

Our fair readers may perhaps turn up their noses at the plain style and bald truth of our remarks. We shall transcribe a whole chapter from Montesqieu, to shew them how gallantly he makes mention of them — and if a Frenchman could so express himself, we hope we stand excused in their eyes.

BOOK. XXIII. chap. 9.

"Young women, who are conducted by
"marriage alone to liberty and pleasure,
"who have a mind which dares not think,
"a heart which dares not feel, eyes
"which dare not see, ears which dares
"not hear, who appear only to shew
"themselves silly, and condemned without
"intermission to trifles and precepts,
"have sufficient inducements to lead
"them on to marriage; it is the young
"men that want to be encouraged."

Perhaps the concluding sentiment may in the opinion of the fair sex, atone the boldneſs of the former; although even there by a small change of the copula, Montesquieu applies to woman the language of inspiration when speaking of the Idols of Gentile worship. If still our point is not made, we can add one, that it belongs to the Poet to shew things as they ought to be, to the Historian to unveil them as they are.

When we consider these distinctions in all their bearings, the injustice of the male sex is conspicuously exhibited in the complaints they make of their spouses. Vain, ignorant of themselves, unforgiving and ungenerous, men when disappointed in their anticipations of connubial happiness, are apt to forget their own motives in seeking the alliance, their own conduct before engaging in it, their deceit, and their own defects. Excepting the cardinal point, continency, defects of minor importance and consequence rarely give a husband any right to complaint, where he has not been grossly deceived. His own want of discernment and his own precipitancy are to be charged to his own account.

If he marries a woman for any

single attraction, he has no reason for murmuring if he does not find every other virtue and accomplishment; unleſs he looks for a miraculous combination of Nature with Fortune, to give him a treasure which he is to obtain without pains and without merit.

If he weds a lady for her numerical charms, after he has got poſseſsion of her strong box, has he any right to grumble if she has neither sense or feeling? or if beauty attracted him solely, can he with Justice be pitied, if he find its poſseſsor an arrant flirt and irreclaimable coquette? or if the brilliance of wit attracted him, and drew him in its toils without reflection; what has he to curse but his own stupidity, if in meddling with sharp edged tools he cuts his fingers and find their keenneſs turned upon himself, or making him suffer for their unlicensed eccentricities? In a word, if he becomes enamoured of a quality or attribute, only estimable as it is properly poſseſsed, and employed, without pausing to consider the uses to which it is put, he ought only to blame his own ignorance of the depravity of human nature.

And, on the other hand, if before he forms the indissoluble connexion, he is fully aware of the absence of any of the requisites in matrimony, he is contemptibly mean and unjust, if he is afterwards urged by any claim of anger whatever to make that a reproach, which he consented to endure before the contract was consummated. If his wife has no personal beauty, no sense, no wealth, he should have considered how he could tolerate such deficiencies, before he determined his unshackled will.

Trite as these remarks are, and palpapable as their truth must appear, and often as they must have suggested themselves to the mind of every Benedict, whether in the way of consolation or of reproof, how little are they regarded by those, who find a selfish alleviation of their misery by shifting its origin on the shoulders of the guiltless, and thereby render their fu:

-ture hopes of tranquillity more distant!

It may not be amiſs to illustrate a little Montesquieu's proposition, that "the young men want to be encouraged."

Strong as the inducement to the intercourse of the sexes is, and indispensable as the controul which the sovereignty must exercise over it has been found in all civil society, even in the earliest ages it was found neceſsary to enact laws, to controul the aberrations of licentiousneſs, and direct the paſsions of men in a channel where they became useful to the community by supplying it with citizens and soldiers.

It seems to have been a very early notion that religion had something to do with marriage; although a disciple of the reformation can hardly conceive of it in any other than a civil point of view. But the legislators of the earlier ages were also the founders of their respective creeds; and the priests were the ministers of law. The Greeks attributed to Orpheus and other priests the institution of the nuptial contract. Zoroaster forcibly inculcated its expediency, and asserted its sanctity among the Chaldæans; while he proscribed and prohibited the indulgence of transient gratification, as detrimental to the interests of society and violating the principles of religion. The Sadder or Persian abridgment of the Zend says, "that whoever has had to do with a harlot, shall lose for *forty days* his understanding, knowledge and discernment; and that children will be the only bridge at the last day, over which we can pass into the mansions of immortality." The quaintness of the first of these sentiments is, to us, unaccountably singular in specifying definitely the result of what is undefinitely injurious; and the last dogma, if correct, would keep out of Paradise many an honest man, who had done his best to attain immortality, with hearty good will and sincere endeavours.

Of the two immortal poems of Homer, the fatal consequences of a breach of the sacred tie of matrimony forms the theme of the first; and the constancy of a spouse who was solicited by persevering and noble suitors for lingering years of worse than widowhood, is the keystone of the second. In the heroic ages, the sanctity of marriage was held inviolable as the rites of hospitality; and we find no such practice recorded by historians as that which prevailed among our Aborigines; who, while they respected the stranger's demand on their courtesy, lent him their wives as an essential duty of hospitality.+

From the laws and customs of the heroic nations, the Descendants of Hercules and Theseus, Lycurgus framed his code for the inhabitants of Laconia. A whimsical rule relative to Bachelors has been handed down to posterity: but from what part of his model Homer he framed it, remains, we believe, undetermined. Such of the Lacedemonian young men, as after having attained the proper age, showed no disposition to enter into a matrimonial connexion, "were debarred from assisting at the female dances,"* They were

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+ Vide Carver's travels, passim

* Gillies Greece. I. 3

"compelled to walk naked through the streets, in the winter solstice, singing a ludicrous song, which confessed the justice of the punishment." The consequences may be easily imagined. They soon grew tired of being laughing stocks to the women; put on their clothes, and got married.

The senate of ancient Rome according to Livy, made many regulations in favour of matrimony. And if they were found necessary when that empire was in its infancy, they became still more so in the days of the Emperors; when uncontrolled licentiousness prevailed from the monarch to the lowest of the people, and when two thirds of the senate had no wives - but instead of them an incredible number of concubines and subjects of casual prostitution; when unnatural passions and brutal lust contributed with famine pestilence and war, to depopulate the centre of government while the distant provinces became a desert. Caesar and Augustus saw the evil; and assumed the office of the ancient censors, to whom in more virtuous days it had belonged to see the citizens respectably married, and honorably maintaining the credit of their families. But of the first Caesar, tales are related which brand his memory with infamy surpassing his glory — and while the historian has exalted the latter, the satyrist and coiner of medals have everlastingly perpetuated the former. Augustus is accused of a clandestine commerce with his own daughter Julia, and the private history of his age assigns a discovery of this intercourse, as the secret cause of the banishment of Ovid.

Among the institutions of his day, was one prohibiting women under forty five years of age, who had neither husbands or children from wearing jewels or riding in litters. Now if the unhappy female who incurred the penalty of this law could prove that she had never had an offer, it would seem very hard to prevent her ever getting any, by compelling her to add no ornaments to her ugliness and restraining her from shewing herself to the people. Marriage gave a man certain rights; among which was that of a front seat in the theatre; while he who had most children was entitled to the highest place in the Senate. We presume equal honors have been bestowed on the worthy Alderman, to whom the Common Council of London lately voted a silver tankard, because his wife brought him four children all at once. We confess we are unable to divine the motives of this munificence — if the good magistrate was poor, his punch-bowl would hardly help him to pay his debts, and maintain such a litter. Emulation is hopeless, when individuals are rewarded, merely for being accessary to prodigies.

How far the political philosophy of modern days would think an interference of the legislative authority with that most valuable absolute right of individuals, of marrying whom, and when they please, allowable, we know not. But if such aid were necessary, in a nation not radically corrupt, if the strong propensities of nature, the allurements of domestic bliss, and the relish for all the social charities be wanting, penalties would only corroborate the unnatural aversion, and make individuals miserable without adding to the welfare of the community. — — — "

Some expedients for the benefit of maids and bachelors, who may be destined to a cheerless old age without them ~~will~~ may be suggested in some ~~[illegible]~~ future number. S.